

The Chatham Railroad Company

Founded in 1886, the Chatham Railroad Company was chartered to build seven miles of track from the Old Colony Railroad Mainline in Harwich to Chatham along with a yard and two stations. The Honorable Marcellus Eldredge who had made a fortune in the brewery business was President of the company. The track and stations were completed during 1887, with mail, lumber, grain and coal being shipped in and mail, fish, shellfish and cranberries being shipped out. Four passenger trains a day carried residents and visitors to and from Boston. During 1891, the Chatham Railroad Company served the needs of 22,000 passengers at its two stations with baggage and express service to the hotels and inns springing up in Chatham and South Chatham. The Chatham Railroad Company owned no rolling stock but leased its track and stations first to the Old Colony Railroad and then in 1893 to the New York New Haven and Hartford Railroad. Service on the Chatham Railroad ceased in 1937 but the railroad depot in Chatham remained and became the home of the Chatham Railroad Museum in 1960.